United Nations S/PV.3708

Security Council

Fifty-first Year

Provisional

3708th Meeting

Friday, 1 November 1996, 3.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wisnumurti	(Indonesia)
Members:	Botswana	Mr. Legwaila
	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Germany	Mr. Eitel
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Cabral
	Honduras	Mr. Martínez Blanco
	Italy	Mr. Fulci
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Choi
	Russian Federation	Mr. Chtcherbak
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mrs. Albright

Agenda

The situation in the Great Lakes region

Letters dated 14 and 24 October 1996 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1996/875 and S/1996/878)

96-86682 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.50 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of November, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Gerardo Martínez Blanco, Permanent Representative of Honduras to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of October 1996. I am sure I speak for all members of the Security Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Martínez Blanco for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Great Lakes region

Letters dated 14 and 24 October 1996 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1996/875 and S/1996/878)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Zaire, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lukabu Khabouji N'Zaji (Zaire) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them documents S/1996/875 and S/1996/878, which contain the texts of letters dated 14 and 24 October 1996, respectively, from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following other documents: S/1996/869, letter dated 23 October 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council; S/1996/876, letter dated 25 October 1996 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General; and S/1996/886, letter dated 25 October 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council is gravely concerned at the deteriorating situation in the Great Lakes region, in particular eastern Zaire, and at the effect which the continued fighting is having on the inhabitants of the region and condemns all acts of violence. It underlines the urgent need for a comprehensive and coordinated response by the international community to prevent any further escalation of the crisis there.

"The Security Council calls for an immediate ceasefire and a complete cessation of all fighting in the region. The Council calls on all States to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighbouring States in accordance with their obligations under the United Nations Charter. In this connection, it urges all parties to refrain from the use of force as well as cross-border incursions and to engage in a process negotiation.

"The Security Council, in the light of the letters of the Secretary-General to the President of the Council (S/1996/875 and S/1996/878), and the information received from the High Commissioner for Refugees and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights regarding the situation in eastern Zaire, is particularly concerned at the humanitarian situation and the resulting large-scale movements of refugees and displaced persons. It fully supports the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and humanitarian agencies to alleviate the suffering. It calls on all parties in the region to allow humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations to deliver humanitarian assistance to those in need and to ensure the safety of all refugees as well as the security and freedom of movement of all international humanitarian personnel. It

underlines the urgent need for the orderly voluntary repatriation and resettlement of refugees, and the return of displaced persons, which are crucial elements for the stability of the region.

"The Security Council agrees with the Secretary-General that the situation in eastern Zaire constitutes a serious threat to the stability of the Great Lakes region. It is convinced that the complex problems at issue can only be resolved through early and substantive dialogue. The Council urges the Governments of the region to pursue such a dialogue without further delay in order to defuse the tension. The Council calls upon all States in the region to create the conditions necessary for the speedy and peaceful resolution of the conflict, and to desist from any acts that may further exacerbate the situation. In this context, the Council welcomes all regional efforts aimed at defusing tension in the region, in particular the announcement of the meeting of regional leaders scheduled for 5 November 1996 in Nairobi, Kenya.

"The Security Council fully supports the initiative of the Secretary-General to dispatch to the Great Lakes region a Special Envoy to consult with all concerned in order to establish the facts relating to the present conflict; to develop as a matter of urgency a plan to defuse tension and establish a ceasefire; to promote a process of negotiation; and to submit advice on the mandate to be given to a United Nations Special Representative including on the size and structure of a United Nations political presence which, in consultation with the Governments and parties concerned, will be established in the Great Lakes region. The Council also considers that the Special Envoy should be provided with adequate staff and logistic resources in order to carry out his mission. The Council also expresses the hope that the mediation efforts of the Organization of African Unity and the European Union will complement those of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General. The Council calls upon all Governments and parties concerned to cooperate fully with the mission of the Special Envoy, and to contribute to the search for a comprehensive solution to the problems facing the people of the Great Lakes region. Given the urgency of the situation, the Council expresses the hope that the Special Envoy will travel as soon as possible to the region and provide early information on the situation there.

"The Security Council reiterates that the present situation in eastern Zaire underlines the need to organize a conference on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. To this end, it calls on the Secretary-General to ask his Special Envoy to promote the convening and to encourage the adequate preparation of such a conference on an urgent basis.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/1996/44.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on the agenda.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.